

PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES FOR RURAL DWELLERS IN BENUE EAST SENATORIAL ZONE

By

AONDOWASE AUGUSTINE MCHIHI, CLN

WINIFRED QUEEN GUGUR, CLN

And

DOOSHIMA CYNTHIA ANGYO, CLN

Abstract

This study investigated the provision of information resources in public libraries for effective utilization by rural dwellers in Benue East Senatorial Zone. The study examined the types of information resources available, assessed the level of accessibility and utilization, and identified challenges hindering the provision and utilization of information resources. The study used a descriptive survey design and simple random sampling technique to select 252 respondents. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The study found that 11 out of 16 listed information resources were available in public libraries, and the methods employed in making information resources accessible to rural dwellers included traditional library catalogues, browsing in cyber cafes, browsing on mobile phones, and library staff. The study also identified several challenges faced by public libraries, including poor infrastructure, outdated information resources, lack of financial support, and inadequate accommodation. The study recommends that state governments prioritize provision of information resources, train information agents to create public awareness, and provide internet connectivity to enhance library services.

Keywords: Information Resources, Information Provision, Public Libraries, Utilization, Rural dweller

Introduction

According to Mchihi (2012) The provision of information resources in public libraries is essential for rural dwellers, as it enables them to access knowledge, improve their livelihoods, and participate in decision-making processes. However, despite the importance of public libraries, many rural communities in Benue East Senatorial Zone continue to experience limited access to relevant information resources. The provision of information resources in public libraries is crucial for effective utilization by rural dwellers in Benue East Senatorial Zone, as it directly impacts their access to knowledge, education, and opportunities for development. Access to information is a fundamental need for individuals and communities to thrive, especially in rural areas where resources are limited. Public libraries, serving as information hubs, have the potential to bridge the information gap and empower rural populations. Effective utilization of information resources in libraries can lead to improved literacy, enhanced economic opportunities, and better living conditions for rural dwellers.

Benue East Senatorial Zone, like many rural areas, faces unique challenges related to infrastructure, education, and access to information. Understanding the specific context of this region is crucial for developing targeted and effective strategies for library service delivery. Effective utilization of information resources implies not only access but also the ability of rural dwellers to understand, interpret, and apply that information to their daily lives.

The public library is the local gateway to knowledge; it provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto in Venkatesan, 2018). Public libraries are nonprofit organizations established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. They provide access to knowledge, information and works of information through a range of resources and services that are meant to be equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status including educational attainment. In other words, public libraries are

locally based service organization set up to meet the needs of the local communities while contributing to the creation and maintenance of a well informed and democratic society.

Public libraries help to empower people in the enrichment and development of their lives and that of the communities. According to Parvathamma and Reddy in Mchihi (2012) public libraries has various information and educational services they render over time. They are also well known to stimulate imaginative horizons while making the empowerment of citizens and provision of library and information service on common cultural heritage a reality. The general services rendered by the public libraries include the following selective dissemination of information, current awareness programs, library services children services to children, bindery Services, reference services and loan/cooperation. To effectively render services to client, the information needs of the rural population are identified and services such as reference services are deemed to be relevant to them. It is in view of this that Islam and Ahmed (2012) noted that public libraries assist people to contribute to the growth of knowledge, make much use of leisure as well as promote personal and social well-being, develop their creative and spiritual and social obligations to become better members of home and community, keep pace with progress in all field and educate themselves continuously. Reference service involves the librarian who is the middle man between the reader of possible sources, directing users to bibliographic tools that serves as guide to the literature of the subject. Bindery of back issues of periodicals, repair of damaged text and other materials are undertaken at the bindery section of the public libraries.

Adegbule-Adesina in Ukachi (2007) opines that since the essence of rural libraries is to provide basic information to peasant farmers and illiterates, and bearing in mind that these people can read or write, these libraries must provide not only books but also a lot of non-print and audio visual materials because these people obtain understand information better through oral, visual and auditory means communication. Thus, the resources of the public that will be helpful to the objectives of the establishment includes: Compact Disk (CDS), newspaper, journals, photo collection, articles, audio

books, records and tapes. Therefore, the general services rendered by the public libraries include, selective dissemination of information, current awareness programs, library services to children, bindery services, reference services, inter- library loan/ cooperation.

According to Ochogwu cited by Mchihi (2012) information provision means a concerted effort to increase production, create and spread employment, eradicating fundamental causes of poverty, diseases and ignorance. Provision of information also means supplying information resources or making information available to a person or group of persons by information professionals. Information provision is the collection or acquisition of the oriented and audiovisual materials needed by the users of the public library community to conduct the individual or group of its constituency research. It is also seen as the presence or availability of information in different formats in the public library for users' information wants, needs and utilization to satisfy their information wants and needs. It involves the organization of the available information resources in a most convenient order to enhance convenient and easy to use. Information provision in public libraries can be done in different forms. Typically, IFLA/UNESCO in Ode et'al (2023) identified the categories of information resources that may be represented in a typical public library as fiction and non-fiction materials for adults, young adults and children, reference work, access to databases, local regional and national newspapers, community information, government information, including information by ad about administrations, business information, local history resources in the primary languages of the community, resources in other languages, music scores, computer games, toys, games and puzzles and study material. Other resources to be provided in the public libraries for utilization include human resources, building, books and magazines, computers, DVDs, VCDs, audio books, Video Tapes and CDROMs from the public libraries, music CDs and Music Scores (Singapore in Ode et'al (2023).

Utilization simply means to effectively and judiciously make use of the available resources and services of the public library. It is the extent which people are making use of whatever resources that is already available in the

community or in an organization (Onah, 2013). Utilization is a concept derived from the word “utilize” meaning to make use of something for a particular purpose. Nwachukwu, Abdusalami and Salami (2014) defined use or utilization as to make use of something for a particular purpose. The word utilization according to Nwachukwu, Abdusalami and Salami (2014) is derived from the word “utilize” which simply means to make use of something for a particular purpose. Utilization is the extent to which the available resources and services of the university library are identified, searched, located, accessed and made use of by the students’ who need them. It is according to Abraham (2023) users ability to identify what is readily available and make adequate use of it. In other words, utilization of library resources will enable students in general gain a high level of research output. Utilization of these resources helps to achieve the various academic purposes among undergraduate students and other level of students in the university.

Rural dwellers according to Allen in Mchihi (2012) are grassroots dwellers are people who are deprived, isolated and life to them generally is boring. Rural dwellers are yard sticks of measuring the progress of a developing nation or country like Nigeria. This is because the status of the rural dwellers as justified by Nwafor in Annunobi, Ogbonna and Osuchukwu (2014) is made up of seventy percent of the population in places like Nigeria. Rural dwellers are characterized by highly illiterate petty traders, subsistence farmers, low population, primary production and few basic/social infrastructures (Muhammed & Annunobi, et al., 2014). Developing rural dwellers indicates a positive indicator for national development and their involvement in the developmental process becomes very much imperative. To achieve this, identification of their information needs and the provision of innovative rural public library services becomes necessary (Obinyan, Obinyan & Aidenojie).

Rural public library information services are offered to satisfy the information needs and wants of the local community in consideration of their locality with a focus on producing a well informed and democratic society. Islam and Ahmed (2012) indicated that rural library users required information about education (73 percent), health (57 percent),

religion (56 percent), entertainment (47 percent), current affairs (43 percent), agriculture (32 percent), politics (28 percent) and family planning (21 percent). Abolaji (2009) emphasized that the collection is geared towards providing for moral and cultural edification in contrast to other libraries that house research materials. Due to the predominately oral traditional communication method, most of the rural dwellers source their information through indigenous means including town criers, churches/mosques and non conventional sources like friends and close associates, as well as organized groups like agricultural extension workers, political groups and co-operative societies, (Ogbebor, 201). Consequently, Allen in Mchihi (2012) noted that rural populace in essence represents the bulk of victims of inaccessibility to urban amenities as health facilities, good road, acute low productivity, social and economic retrogression due mainly to ignorance, which is also a direct consequences of either inadequate or total lack of information provision to them, hence their social come participation in national development efforts. This calls for the need to investigate the provision of information resources in public libraries for effective utilization by rural dwellers of Benue North East Senatorial Zone, Nigeria.

The Benue North-East Senatorial Zone is made up of 7 Local Government mainly Katsina-Ala, Vandeikya, Konshisha, Ushongo, Kwande, Ukum and Logo Local government area respectively. The Zone is bounded by Cross River State in the South, the Republic of Cameroon in the Easter and North West are bounded by Wukari and Takum local movement area of Taraba State. It has a population of 153.1418 (Population Census Projection, 2009). As a result of its mountainous nature and proximity to the Cameroonian range of mountains, Kwande, Ukum and Vandeikya local government have an averagely cold weather.

Statement of the Problem

Public libraries in Benue East Senatorial Zone face significant challenges in providing adequate and accessible information resources to rural dwellers, hindering their ability to access knowledge, education, and socio-economic opportunities. Despite their crucial role in bridging the information gap, rural communities in the zone experience limited

access to relevant information resources, affecting their overall development and well-being. Public libraries are vital institutions that provide information resources and services to users, including rural dwellers. However, inadequate provision and lack of awareness about available resources can lead to low utilization rates.

The effective provision of information resources by public libraries can empower rural dwellers, regardless of their literacy level, by exposing them to their basic human rights, creating awareness, and helping them make informed decisions. Information provision can also contribute to the prosperity of a society. Unfortunately, despite concerted efforts by public libraries in Benue State to deploy information resources, there may not be commensurate improvement in effective utilization by rural dwellers in Benue East Senatorial Zone.

Effective information provision by public libraries for effective utilization by rural dwellers may expose them to their basic human rights irrespective of their literate or illiterate levels. It can also help in the creation of awareness in all ramifications and also help in the determination of who will do well and who will not do well in the society. Information provision to rural dwellers will also help in the determination of the prosperity of a society. In spite of this, no empirical investigation has been carried out to find out the provision of information resources in public libraries for effective utilization by rural dwellers of Benue North East Senatorial Zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

1. What types of information resources are available in public libraries in Benue East Senatorial Zone?
2. What are the methods employed in providing information resources for use by the rural dwellers in the zone?
3. What challenges do public libraries face in providing information resources to rural dwellers?

Literature Review

Public libraries are defined in various but similar ways. According to Shidi, Aju and Ashaver (2014) a public library is a library that is established and managed with the public funds. Arua (2015) defines it as one of the earliest type of library in Africa and Nigeria that is funded, managed and supported by the state and local communities and sometimes Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Adikwu (2017) described public libraries as those libraries that are established, funded and controlled by the state government with its branches at local government head quarters. Similarly, Ioryem, Sambe and Aina (2020) viewed public libraries as libraries that are established, funded and controlled by the state government with its branches at local government headquarters. Udofot (2021) in his own way defined public libraries as places where people go freely in search for information for self education and pleasure. Generally, public libraries are established to significantly according to Shidi, et al., (2014) contribute to the quality of life, promote the concept of democratic society and add to the sum total of man's happiness and awareness of himself. The primary purposes of the public library as identified by Ogbebor (2011) are to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. According to Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) the public library is established to provide materials communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people

Information resources provision is the presence of information resources in public libraries for users. It is according to Ochogwu cited by Mchihi (2012) a concerted effort to increase production, create and spread employment, eradicating fundamental causes of poverty, diseases and ignorance. It also refers to a means of supplying information resources or making information available to a person or group of person(s) by information professionals. It is also a method of providing published or processed information. It is according to IGI Global (2021) a process within which information is provided to users or user community without any individualization of content or purpose-specialization of

the information or the delivery process. Information provision could also be described as the process of making information in whatever format available to users to satisfy their information needs.

Information resources provision which is regarded by Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami and Salami (2014) as availability of information resources establishes a new standard for system and network that are always on for applications and data that are always available and for end users that are always connected. Information resources provision also entails acquiring and also providing means by which users could get necessary information resources needed. It is an attempt to ensuring that every user gets information materials which could satisfy his/her information need. Indeed, information resources provision could justify the existence of the library or information center.

Information resources provision is important in several ways. IGI Global (2021) identified these as improved decision making, better treatment adherence, better health status, and lower levels of distress, improved satisfaction with care and a sense of control. Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA) (2021) opines that the provision and use of information plays a key role in enabling educational authorities to improve their planning and decision making as well as allowing students and parents to make informed choices about their education.

In view of the importance of information resources provision, information can be provided in various ways. Some of these include face to face discussion, telephone, market discussion, classroom or lecture halls, books and non-book materials among others. In libraries, Shidi and Sambe (2019) identified media of information provision as print, outdoor, broadcast, internet, hand-held devices and social media. The media consist of textual and visual images or pictures which are carefully designed to attract and inform library users while the outdoor media present or provide information to users on electronic billboards, billboards and bus panel. The broadcast media is a means of information provision through radio and television whereas the internet is a means of information provision that is done through email, listseries, teleconferencing, blogs and websites. The hand-held media is a means of information provision through cell-phones, Ipads

and Smart phones while social media is a means of information provision on social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, whatsapp, LinkedIn, etc. The media consist of textual and visual images or pictures which are carefully designed to attract and inform library users while the outdoor media present or provide information to users on electronic billboards, billboards and bus panel. The broadcast media is a means of information provision through radio and television whereas the internet is a means of information provision that is done through email, listseries, teleconferencing, blogs and websites. The hand-held media is a means of information provision through cell-phones, Ipads and Smart phones while social media is a means of information provision on social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, whatsapp, LinkedIn, etc.

Information resources are provided in public libraries to offer effective, efficient and quality service delivery to users with the aim of providing equitable access to information and satisfying the information needs of the library clientele and society in general. Information provision has been identified as ingredients for decision making (Ogunmodede, Apata and Nwokeoma (2016), and as catalyst for decision making and all round development. It is the only factor that categorizes and differentiates the world into developed and developing, rich and poor economies and advanced and less developed nations of the world. It is important to note that the availability and usage patterns of information for projection, rather than the years of creation, are often what distinguish the economies of the first and third worlds.

Moze and Ubwa (2017) in their study on the challenges of utilizing university resources by undergraduate students of Benue State University Makurdi revealed lack of practical user orientation and others. Similarly, Unegbu, Ladan and Adekaanye (2016) studied barriers to effective utilization of library resources availability at Fatiu Adenola Akesode library Lagos State University, Nigeria and revealed frequent power outage, none allowance to use flash drive to copy from the library's computers, short duration of borrowing period among others as the main barriers to the effective undergraduate students library usage at Lagos State University. Moreso, Buhari (2016) in his study on library information resources and services utilization as correlates of creativity of senior administrative staff of polytechnics in south West,

Nigeria found the challenges militating against provision of library resources to include; erratic power supply, inadequate information and communication technologies, poor maintenance culture, inadequate funding and low bandwidth of internet access.

Methodology

The design of this study is descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey according to Mole (2019) is the type of design that is interested in observing and describing the existing characteristics of an event or situation without manipulating any variable. The area of this study is Benue North East Senatorial Zone. Benue North East Senatorial Zone is one of the three Senatorial Zones in the state namely Benue North East, Benue North West and Benue North South Senatorial Zones. The Benue North East Senatorial Zone is made up of seven local government areas namely Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya Local Government Areas. It is bounded by Cross River, Taraba and Nasarawa States respectively. The choice of the senatorial zone was justified by a good population of rural dwellers who are predominantly farmers and petty traders. The total population of this study consists of seven (7) local governments with a total of one million, five hundred and thirteen thousand, six hundred and seventy-four (1, 513, 674). This include according to the Director of Library Services, Makurdi (2022) fourteen (14) library staff and also one million, five hundred and thirteen thousand, six hundred and sixty (1,513, 660) people (National Population Commission of Nigeria, 2006). Simple random sampling technique was employed as a sampling technique to arrive at the sample size of 252 respondents which was used for the study. This is justified by its ability to enable the researcher have equal right of randomly making a uniform selection from all the starters. The instrument for data collection for this study is questionnaire. titled “Provision and Utilization of Information Resources Questionnaire (PUIRQ-S)”. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, mean and standard deviation using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. For the

percentages, the researcher consider percentages from 50% and above as accepted and useful while those less than 50% were to be rejected and not used. For mean and standard deviation, the researcher consider the average mean of 3.50-4.00 as strongly agree, 2.50-3.40 as agree, 1.50-2.49 as disagree and 1.50-1.49 as strongly disagree. This means that only means of 2.50 and above were acceptable while the mean below 2.50 were to be rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What types of information resources available in public libraries in Benue North-East Senator Zone?

Table 1: Observation Checklist on types of Information Resources Available by the Public Libraries in Benue North-East Senator Zone

S/N		Local Government												Overall		D
		KA		KO		KW		LO		UK		US		A	NA	
		A	NA	A	NA	A	NA	A	NA	A	NA	A	NA			
1	Text book	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
2	Journals	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
3	Maps	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
4	Computers	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
5	Databases	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
6	Audiovisual	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
7	CD ROMS	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
8	Thesis and dissertations		√		√		√		√		√		√	0(0%)	6(100%)	NA
9	Conference proceeding	√			√	√		√		√			√	4(66.7%)	2(33.3%)	
10	Indexes		√		√		√		√		√		√	0(0%)	6(100%)	NA
11	Abstracts		√		√		√		√		√		√	0(0%)	6(100%)	NA
12	Newspapers	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
13	Government publications	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
14	Posters	√		√		√		√		√		√		6(100%)	0(0%)	A
15	Manuscripts		√		√		√		√		√		√	0(0%)	6(100%)	NA
16	Databases		√		√		√		√		√		√	1(0%)	5(100%)	NA
		11(68.8%)	5(31.2%)	10(62.5%)	6(37.5%)	12(75%)	4(25%)	11(68.8%)	5(31.2%)	11(68.8%)	5(31.2%)	10(62.5%)	6(37.5%)			

Keys: KA=Katsina-Ala, KO=Konshisha, KW=Kwande, LO=Logo, UK=Ukum, US=Ushongo and VA=Vandeikya Local Government Areas., A= Available. NA=Not available, D=Decision

Table 1 above shows the types of information resources available by the public libraries in Benue, North-East Senator Zone. It is observe from the table that out of sixteen (16) listed information resources , an aggregate of eleven (11) information resources are available in public libraries in Benue North-East Senator Zones Also, in Konshisha Local Government Areas were 11(68.8%) available , while 5(31.2%) were not available , in Kwande Local Government Areas 10(62.5%) were available , while 6(37.5%) were not available, 12(75%) in Logo Local Government Areas were available , while 4(25%) were not available, in Ukum Local Government Areas 11(68.8%) available , while 5(31.2%) were not available, in Ushongo Local Government Areas were 11(68.8%) available, while 5(31.2%) were not available and in Vandeikya Local Government Areas 10(62.5%) were available , while 6(37.5%) were not available.

Information resources that are available in the public libraries in Benue include text books, these include Journals/periodicals, Maps, Computers, Audiovisual, CD ROMS, Conference proceedings, Newspapers, Government publications, Posters, Manuscripts. However, information resources such as Databases, Indexes, Abstracts, Thesis and dissertations were not available

Research Question 2: What are the methods employed in providing information resources for use by the rural dwellers in the zone?

Research Question 2: What are the methods employed in providing information resources for use by the rural dwellers in the zone?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on Methods Employed in Making the Information Resources Provided Accessible to the Rural Dwellers in the Zone

SN		Overall		R	D
		$\bar{X}$	SD		
1	Library staff	3.50	.77	1 st	HE
2	Browsing on mobile phones	3.35	.77	2 nd	E

3	Traditional library catalogues	3.12	.81	3 rd	E
4	Browsing in cyber café	3.11	1.13	4 th	E
5	Institutional repositories	2.34	.89	5 th	LE
6	Browsing on tabs	2.07	.91	6 th	LE
7	Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	1.53	.65	7 th	LE
Cluster Mean		2.78	.86		A

Keys HE =Highly Employe dt, E=Employed, LE=Less Employed, NE = Not Employed

The respondents were asked to indicate the methods employed in making the information resources provided accessible to the rural dwellers in the zone. Using the real limit of numbers on a 4 points scale, responses as presented on Table 2 indicated that that respondents accepted that all the items except Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) ($\bar{X}$ =1.53, SD=.65), Institutional repositories ($\bar{X}$ =2.34, SD=.89) and Browsing on tabs($\bar{X}$ =2.07, SD=.91) were either highly employed or employed. The highly method employed in making the information resources provided accessible to the rural dwellers includes Library staff ($\bar{X}$ =3.50, SD=.77), Browsing on mobile phones ($\bar{X}$ =3.35, SD=.77), Traditional library catalogues ($\bar{X}$ =3.12, SD=.81) and Browsing in cyber café ($\bar{X}$ =3.11, and SD=1.13) were accepted as being employed.

Also, the overall mean showed that browsing on mobile phones ($\bar{X}$ =3.18, SD=.88) is ranked highest, while Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) ($\bar{X}$ =1.53, SD=.65) is ranked lowest as regard methods employed in making the information resources provided accessible to the rural dwellers.

The Methods employed in making the information resources provided accessible to the rural dwellers includes traditional library catalogues, browsing in cyber-café, browsing on mobile phones and Library staff.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges associated with provision and utilization information resources in the zone?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Staff and User on challenges associated with information provision and utilization.

SN	OVERALL	D
----	---------	---

		$\bar{X}$	SD	
	Staff	2.78	.98	A
1	Poor infrastructure like chairs, tables, shelves	2.94	.87	A
2	Outdated information resources	2.93	.94	A
3	Lack of financial support	2.91	.86	A
4	Lack of employment of qualified personnel	2.80	.93	A
5	Lack of conducive storage facilities	2.67	.98	A
6	Lack of content providers empowerment	2.67	.97	A
7	Inadequate opening hours	2.54	.78	A
	User	2.77	.93	A
1	Inadequate accommodation	2.95	.93	A
2	Lack of user's assistance	2.91	.94	A
3	Outdated information resources	2.88	.92	A
4	Lack of enabling environment for information resources utilization	2.84	1.09	A
5	Illiteracy	2.82	.97	A
6	Inadequate chairs and tables	2.77	1.07	A
7	Inadequate number of qualified staff in the library	2.68	.66	A
8	Inadequate opening hours	2.58	.73	A
9	Lack of internet facilities	2.51	.91	A
	Cluster Mean	2.77	.94	A

KEYS:: R=Rank ; D=Decision ; A – Agree ; SD= Standard Deviation

The data presented in Table 3 revealed the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the problems militating against the provision and utilization of information resources by the rural dwellers. Using criterion mean of 2.50 on a 4 point rating scale, the table indicates that challenges listed for both staff and users were all accepted by respondents. Furthermore among the clusters for staffs, the overall mean showed that Poor infrastructure ($\bar{X}$ =2.94, SD=.87) is ranked highest, while inadequate opening hours ($\bar{X}$ = 2.54, SD=.78) is ranked lowest. Also, the users cluster indicated that inadequate accommodation ($\bar{X}$ =2.95, SD=.93) is ranked highest, while lack of internet facilities ($\bar{X}$ = 2.51, SD=.91) is ranked lowest as regard to problems militating against the provision and utilization of information resources by the rural dwellers.

Problems challenges against the provision and utilization of information resources by the rural dwellers includes lack of financial support, poor infrastructure like chairs, tables, shelves, lack of conducive storage facilities, lack of employment of qualified personnel, outdated information resources, Inadequate opening hours, lack of content providers empowerment, inadequate accommodation, lack of enabling environment for information resources utilization, inadequate number of qualified staff in the library, outdated information resources, lack of users assistance, illiteracy, lack of internet facilities.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the study made some recommendations which are:

1. State governments in different forms are encouraged to make provision of information resources a top priority.
2. Trained information agents should be involved in creating public awareness about provision of information resources and library services and for rural dwellers.
3. Libraries and information centres services should be provided for the development of rural dwellers. The local information needs must be understood to be able to develop libraries that will meet those needs. Also, there should be internet connectivity to help the public library staff and users to join millions of the world population in the global village

Conclusion

The rural community dwellers need information that could empower them to become more useful to themselves, be able to maximize their resources and identify sources of information. There is need to provide quality and timely information for rural dwellers so as to have impact on their means of livelihood, this is because relevant information are needed to foster and sustain the development of rural communities and in particular Benue North East Senatorial Zone. The study explored the provision and utilization of information resources in public library by rural dwellers of Benue North East Senatorial Zone. From the findings of the study, it is clearly shown that the community dwellers were lacking information that would

had helped in personal and national development. Having access to quality information will empower the rural dwellers to make qualitative decision in any endeavour and also facilitate their economic activities. Access to information is critical to letting people know their entitlements and responsibility in developing themselves and the nation at large. It is on this basis that the researcher implores all those concerned to make sure that there is adequate and constant information provision for rural dwellers by establishing information centres and public libraries with efficient information agents.

References

- Adikwu, P. U. (2017). Categories of Libraries. In Ioryem, T. N., Adikwu, P.U. & Sambe, M. T. (eds.), *Introduction to Library User Education in Higher Institutions in Nigeria* (Pp17-24). Makurdi: Rayodok Printing and Publishing Co.
- Annunobi, C. N., Ogbonna, A. U. & Osuchukwu, N. P. (2014). *Information Needs of Rural Dwellers as a Measure of the Effectiveness of Library and Information Services Provision in Anambra State, Nigeria*. Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology, 7 (1), 35.
- Arua, G.N. (2015). *Encounter with the library: a use of library guide form schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities*. Nsukka, Nigeria: Chuka Educational Publishers.
- Buhari, G. I. (2016). *Library information resources and services utilization as correlates of creativity of senior administrative staff of polytechnics in south West, Nigeria*. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). 1400. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1400>.
- IGI Global (2021). What is information resource? Retrieved from <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/information-resource/14466>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2018). Data and the Sustainable Development Goals - *IFLA Briefing*. Available at: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/67353> (accessed 14 August, 2022).
- Ioryem, T. N., Sambe, M. T. & Aiyegunle, S. A. (2020). *Library user education: A basic text*. Makurdi: Nath's Printing and Publishing Enterprises.

- Islam, M. S. and Ahmed, S. M. Z. (2012). *The information needs and information-seeking behaviour of rural dwellers: A review of research*. IFLA Journal, 38 (2). Retrieved from [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0340035212444513#:~:text=He%20indicated%20that%20rural%20library,family%20planning%20\(21%20percent\)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0340035212444513#:~:text=He%20indicated%20that%20rural%20library,family%20planning%20(21%20percent))
- Iwhiwhu, B. E. & Okorodudu, P. O. (2012). *Public library information resources, facilities, and services: User satisfaction with the Edo State Central Library, Benin-City, Nigeria*. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 747. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/747> <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/>
- Mchihi, A. A. (2012). *Provision and utilization of information resources in public library by rural dwellers in Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State* (BSc Project). Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Nwachukwu, V.N., Abdulsalami, T. L., Salami, P. F. (2014). *Availability, accessibility and use of information resources and services among information seekers of Lafia Public Library in Nasarawa State*. Information and Knowledge Management, 4 (10),1-10 . Retrieved from www.iiste.org.
- Obinyan, G.A, Obinyan, O.O & Aidenojie, E. (n.d). *Use of information resources in four branches of a state public library in Nigeria*. Chinese Librarianship: an international electronic journal 31 (<http://www.icic.us/cliej/cl3000a.pdf>).
- Ode, A., Adayi, O. I & Musa, M. S. (2023). *Public library extension resources and services in Benue and Kogi State, Nigeria*. Benue State. Polytechnic Journal of Liberal Studies, 4 (1).
- Ogbebor, O. (2011). The public library as an agency set up to render effective and information services to various groups of dwellers in Nigeria through information and communication technology (ICT). Retrieved from <https://osarome.blogspot.com>
- Ogunmodede, T. A.,Nwokocha, N. M and Apata, M. E. (2017). *Effect of information utilization on decision-making of Senior Managers in two Federal government establishments in Abuja, Nigeria*. International Journal of Library Science, 15 (2): 10-22.
- Onah, E. E (2013). *Utilization of reference resources among postgraduate students of federal university libraries in South East Nigeria*. An unpublished MLS project, UNN.

- Shidi, H & Sambe, M. T. (2019). *Public relations and publicity in libraries and information centers*. Makurdi: Nats Printing and Publishing Enterprise.
- Shidi, H., Aju, D. & Ashaver, D. (2014). *Types of libraries and their functions*. In D. Aju and U. Karim (eds.), *Groundworks on the use of library, study skills and information communication technology (ICT)* (pp30-44). Makurdi: Midan Printing and Publishing Enterprises.
- Ukachi, B. N. (2007). Information needs, sources and information seeking behavior of rural women in Badagry, Lagos State. Retrieved from www.researchgate.net/
- Unegbu, V. E, Ladan, M. U and Adekaanye, E. (2016). *Barriers to effective utilization of library resources availability at Fatiu Adenola Akesode library Lagos State University, Nigeria*. *International Journal of Information Processing and Communication*, 4 (1&2), 41-53
- Venkatesan, M. N. (2018). *Public libraries in the modern word*. Retrieved from www.igi-global.com/chapter/public-libraries-in-modern-world/191514